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ABSTRACT

Reflecting the views of teachers, reading specialists, and professors on both the basics and the new technologies in reading instruction, these conference proceedings begin with Carl Personke's address, "The Word's the Thing," on classroom activities that stress the word as concept. The second paper, William Linville's and David Waterman's "Now That You Have a Microcomputer," discusses computer programs in reading and lists companies offering computer catalogs, while the third, "Writing for Reading: Listening to the Flip Side," by Catherine Baker, examines the cause/effect relationship between reading and writing. In the fourth paper, "Reading Poetry: Back to Basics," James Mullican suggests why poetry is basic to human culture and offers strategies for involving children with poetry. The fifth paper, Robert Arnett's "Sans Scintillating Salesmanship Skills, Reading Centers Sag," describes how to convince administrators and students of the importance of reading programs and reading, and the sixth paper, "Listen to My Ideas and I Will Read: A Case for Kindergarten Experiences," by Jan McCarthy, examines the teacher's impact on student learning. Carl Personke's closing address, "Wherein We'll Catch the King," investigates schema theory and reading. (MM)

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Proceedings of the 1983 Thirteenth Annual Reading Conference June 16-17

READING: THE CORE OF LEARNING

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J. Stephen Hazlett
Dean, School of Education

James E. Higgins
Director

This monograph is one in a series
of selected aspects of curriculum development

Proceedings
of the
1983
Thirteenth Annual
Reading Conference
June 16-17

READING: THE CORE OF LEARNING

CURRICULUM RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
TERRE HAUTE

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PREFACE

In the midst of educational turmoil, we are pleased to offer a perspective on reading that recognizes the importance of reading as the core of learning without resorting to hysteria and depression. In these proceedings are well-balanced views representing the thinking of reasonable people who have a wealth of experience to share with the readers. It is both timely and appropriate to consider balance in reading: timely because our methods and expertise are under current attack, and appropriate because reading is too important an area to be left at the mercy of well meaning but uninformed critics.

The current attention given to the back-to-basics movement raises several questions. With respect to teaching reading, these questions center on the meaning of *basics*, the teaching procedures that might best be employed to teach the basics, and the relative emphasis on the components of reading that are included in the definition of *basics*. While the papers included in the proceedings do include some ideas about these questions, we have also considered the new technologies, including the use of microcomputers, to teach the basics. Our speakers represent teachers, reading specialists, education professors, and English professors, thus offering divergent views to accomplish our common aims.

We thank the School of Education for its continued support of this reading conference, and we also thank the many students and teachers who have attended it. Our aim is to provoke thinking about the themes represented in the several conferences we have held, and we hope this conference has resulted in a better understanding of the issues surrounding the topic--Reading: The Core of Learning.

Vanita Gibbs
Robert Pabst
David Waterman

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
HULMAN CIVIC UNIVERSITY CENTER
13TH ANNUAL
READING CONF
JUNE 16 & 17

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READING: THE CORE OF LEARNING

PROGRAM OF
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL READING CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, June 16, 1983

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Hulman Civic Center Meeting Room Complex

Presiding:
David C. Waterman, Co-chairperson

Introduction of Speaker:
Robert Pabst, Co-chairperson

Speaker:
Carl Personke
"The Word's the Thing"

1:30 - 2:20 p.m.

Room AB - William Linville and David Waterman
"Now that you have a microcomputer . . ."

Room C - Catherine Baker
"Writing for Reading: Listening to the Flip Side"

Room DE - James Mullican
"Reading Poetry: Back to the Basics"

2:30 - 3:20 p.m.

Room AB - William Linville and David Waterman
"Now that you have a microcomputer . . . "
(repeat session)

Room C - Robert Arnett
"Sans Scintillating Salesmanship Skills, Reading Centers Sag"

Room DE - Jan McCarthy
"Listen to My Ideas and I Will Read"

- -

FRIDAY, June 17, 1983

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Huiman Civic Center Meeting Room Complex

Speaker:
Carl Personke
"Wherein We'll Catch the King"

Co-chairperson David Waterman discusses the Conference with keynote speaker Carl Personke.

People need to be reminded more than they need to be instructed.

Samuel Johnson

THE WORD'S THE THING . . .*

Carl R. Personke

> There are two reasons for beginning a discussion of [reading] comprehension tasks with word level comprehension. First, words are important to comprehension . . . . Second . . . by beginning with the word, we hope to establish some clear patterns of relations among *ideas* [italics mine] that will apply to sentences and paragraphs as well.

When Professor Dale D. Johnson (n.d.) expressed these ideas at the start of the chapter on "Comprehension of Words," he was taking a position which has been suggested by reading experts since the beginning of this century. Especially in recent years, research in the psycholinguistic nature of the reading process has expanded greatly, and for the most part these new contributions to the literature have consistently demonstrated the validity of Johnson's claim.

Before we continue with this discussion, it might be well to establish some mutual definitions of the words *word* and *concept*. Although the definitions I suggest may not be complex enough to satisfy the needs of exhaustive research and theory, they should suffice for our purposes.

First, a *word* is a label for a concept. Later, we will expand upon this simplified definition. By the same token, our definition of *concept* is that it is an abstraction from a number of experiences. These experiences may be real or linguistic experiences and, although preference would be for both kinds, the reality of the classroom is such that the linguistic experience may have to suffice. Fortunately, research indicates that this type of experience may be the more effective of the two for concept learning.

John Carroll (1964) has suggested that language learning involves three types of experiences which occur more or less simultaneously. He has labeled these:

1. auditory discrimination, which is determing the meaningful sounds and combinations of sounds used in a given language;

2. oral production, which is mastering the production of these sounds and combinations of sounds; and

3. cognition, which he describes as making contact with the environment.

The first two are obvious linguistic functions. In the teaching of reading we handle these primarily by teaching phonetic and structural analysis--phonics, if you will. The third, cognition, occurs when meaning

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*Parts of this paper appear in the proceedings of the First National Reading Conference, Zaria, Nigeria, August, 1982.

is put to words and it is here that the linguistic world and the real world meet. And it is here that psycholinguistics becomes a reality in the teaching of reading.

There has been a great deal of research in psychology and educational psychology to examine how concepts are learned. Much of this research has been incorporated into what sometimes seems to be an amorphous body of assumptions and research we call *schema theory*. We will speak more of that later, but for now we will observe that schema involves us with building bridges between the known and the new or what is often called in the literature world knowledge and text knowledge.

Since our concern here is with vocabulary learning, we will look at how we learn words (concepts) according to an existing schema, which in turn produces a new schema.

As noted above, the experiences necessary to concept learning may be either *real* or *linguistic*. In the past we have tended to treat the linguistic experience as "second rate." In the heady days of the '60s and the origination of Head Start, we scrambled anxiously to find experiences for the "deprived" children in our schools. We took them to zoos, parks, bus stations, grocery stores, ad infinitum, ad nauseum. The linguistic experience was only a matter of attaching words to the active destruction of tractors, grocery carts, and whatever else we encountered in the name of education.

We have now come to understand that the linguistic experience, while definitely related to the real, is an experience with its own identity and its own rules to signify relationships and meanings. The linguistic experience, while it must ultimately make contact with the real, can be used for the development of meaningful vocabulary, concepts, and schemata appropriate to comprehension, problem solving, and the acquisition of knowledge.

In each classroom group there is an extensive body of world knowledge, and this knowledge is different for each child, no matter how homogeneous the group. In order to tap this knowledge, guided discussion is needed; each activity I will suggest today *must* include extensive discussion. The activity is the guide; the discussion is the linguistic experience.

For example, a dictionary will tell us that a *tarn* is "an alpine lake." What will this mean to a child who has lived his or her life on the shores of Lake Erie or Glen Canyon Lake in the Arizona desert? By discussion, however, we can tap the resources of all the "world knowledge" available in the group and the text knowledge available in the classroom.

We are now prepared to accept Bronowski and Bellugi's position (1970) that "what language expresses specifically . . . is the reification by the human mind of its experience . . ." and that "concepts are artifacts extracted by reification from the contexts or sentences in which they occur." To paraphrase, words are, indeed, linguistic concepts and they become real as they are used in language experiences. This is essentially the same position as that taken by Johnson when he posited the reasons for undertaking word comprehension as a first step in reading comprehension.

To get back to our discussion of words as concepts, then, let us consider the fact that just as the experiences which have formulated our concepts have been interrelated in some manner, so have the words which

constituted the linguistic experience been interrelated in the development of each "new" word. This is to say that no word occupies a position in our lexicon which is unrelated to other words in that lexicon. It is by virtue of this fact that we can construct linguistic experiences for our language learners which can either (a) enhance the real experience or (b) become the sole basis for a conceptually valid vocabulary. We can, then, in our reading instructional practices, help readers to construct vocabularies which will advance reading comprehension. Or we can, if we ignore the relationship between word and concept, develop "word callers."

Many specific types of lessons have been developed in order to provide growth in "meaningful vocabulary," which is, after all, what we are talking about. Some of these methods seem to offer more chance of successful results than do others. The remainder of this paper will be devoted to some of the more promising approaches.

Semantic Mapping

The whole notion of semantic mapping is not new, and graphic representations of semantic networks have been offered by Collins and Quillian in 1969 and Lindsay and Norman in 1972, among others. Johnson and Pearson (1978) have made extensive use of this method in their work on reading comprehension in recent years. The following discussion is largely based on their work.

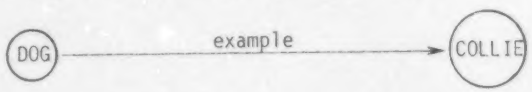
The semantic map is based on four principal relationships among words (or concepts). These are:

1. class--a dog is a mammal
2. example--dog is exemplified by collie
3. attribute or property--dogs bark, have ears, etc.
4. related concepts--cats share some attributes of dogs (as do wolves, in a different way)

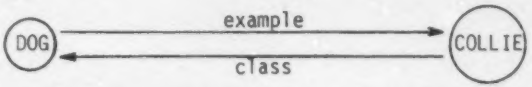
Conducting a lesson in semantic mapping, the teacher will most often begin with a "class" word, most suitably one which originates from material which the learners are confronting, or are about to confront, in their reading. Using the list above as our example, the teacher would then begin with the word *dog*, asking students to suggest words which come to their minds when they hear that word. It is best to have each student construct his or her own list first since group listing often tends to produce a list exclusively devoted to only one of the three relationships suggested.

By combining the children's lists, the teacher may arrive at a list containing such words as *barks, bites, Collie, wolf, bush, has hair, tail, cat, Spot*, etc. It is good practice to ask why a particular word appeared on a list ("Spot is my dog's name" or "I have two pets, a cat and a dog).

Taking one word first from the list, the teacher can begin the map like this

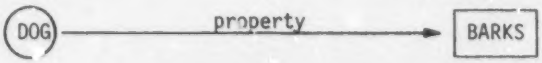


where the concept is enclosed in a circle and the arrow indicates the relationship from class *DOG* to example *COLLIE*. A more sophisticated map might use a double-tracked connector with apposing arrows indicating interrelationships:

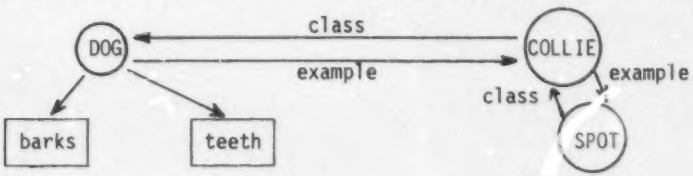


At this point we should observe that both words represent concepts which may be placed in relationships of class or example. *Collie* is an example of *dog*, but is a class in its relationship to *Spot* which is, in its turn, an example of *collie*.

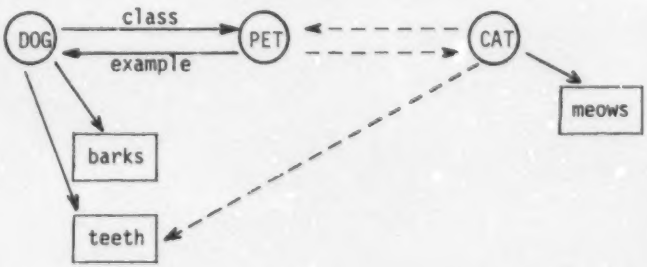
Coming to the word *barks*, the teacher now has a different type of relationship to demonstrate on the map. *Barks* is an "attribute" or "property" of *dog* and is represented by a box, with the direction of relationship toward the attribute, as follows:



Other attributes may be added and our map bagins to look like this:



Coming to the word *cat*, we have a new, but related concept, one which can begin an entirely new semantic map. This position is signified on the map with the same types of interconnecting lines indicating the relationships, but in broken fashion to indicate that they are related, but "new":



Now it should be noted that whereas some attributes (teeth) are shared, others are not (barks, meows).

The finished map will be too complex to be demonstrated in this paper and, indeed, might never be "finished," but from these beginnings the reader should be able to construct a more complete map.

It should also be observed that there are many different types and styles of semantic maps. They need not be as complex as the one presented here; in fact, for most classroom purposes, especially with younger children, they are usually much simpler. The important features of any semantic mapping activity, however, are (a) extensive discussion in order to (b) observe the interrelationships of the concepts.

The advantages of semantic mapping in vocabulary development become immediately apparent in regard to the previous discussion. Concepts are developed through a network which demonstrates graphically the attributes of each and the interrelationships which exist among them. When enough attributes and interrelationships are presented, the linguistic experience alone will usually suffice, through association, to develop a conceptually based vocabulary.

Semantic Feature Grid

This vocabulary teaching device is also used extensively by Johnson, and the discussion and example below is based on his work.

Among the principal factors necessary to concept formation are the discovery and discription of criterial attributes. From these, and through a process of comparing and contrasting, the learner can discover the uniqueness of each concept (word) and the categorical relationships which exist among concepts.

To construct the grid, the teacher begins with a topic word, such as *tools*. (This is, of course, a categorical word, as will be all of the words placed in the vertical column of the grid. Categorical words are the same as the class words of the semantic map, and, as with class words, they may also become examples as they are used in specific situations. *Category*, *class*, and *example* are all relational words.)

Under the topic *tools*, the teacher constructs a vertical listing of tools suggested by the class. Next a listing of features, again suggested by the class, is added across the top. The grid now looks like this:

TOOLS

	Pounds	Cuts	Grips	Wood	Cloth	Dirt	Handle
Hammer							
Saw							
Scissors							
Pliers							
Hoe							

Through class discussion the teacher places a + or a - in the appropriate spaces to indicate which features are descriptive of each word. The class will be able to observe that *hammer* has three pluses (pounds, wood, handle) and four minuses (cuts, grips, cloth, dirt). Thus, a hammer is a *handled* tool used to *pound* (something) in *wood*.

Discussion of the finished grid is a crucial activity in this procedure and must not be neglected. Through discussion the class will discover (a) the *uniqueness* of each tool (concept), (b) the interrelationship existent among the tools (concepts) listed, and (c) the criterial attributes of the categorical concept, *tool*.

There are two ways we might continue with this grid. In the first instance, we may want to look further to discover if other tools are also used to pound on wood. We may want to discover, if some tool not yet listed may have the same features as one already on our list. An axe, for instance, has a handle, cuts, and is used on wood, the same description as for saw. We may want, then, to add new features which will help us to determine additional criterial attributes of our various tools. Similarly, we may want to know if *all* tools have handles. The addition of new words could help us to determine if *handle* is a criterial attribute of *tool*.

A second way to expand our grid is based on the already observed fact that any example word may itself become a category, or class, word. A new grid can be constructed for hammer and new words (ball peen, claw, tack, sledge) can be examined for new features (metal, rounded end, double-ended, etc.). This activity is very much related to Bruner's work (1960) on concept formation and the "spiralling curriculum."

It is also recommended that the teacher prepare in advance a stock of blank grids that can be readily available to individuals or groups for use in future semantic feature analysis activities. As with semantic mapping, semantic feature grids may be more or less complex depending upon the ages of the learners and the purposes of the lesson.

Linguistic Relationships

We do not have to search long to discover that many of the words in our language are used in a variety of phrases and/or contexts with somewhat altered meanings. A classroom activity similar to the semantic feature analysis is useful in determining the interrelationships which exist among these different uses. As with the case of semantic feature analysis, this activity will lead to discoveries of commonality and uniqueness among these linguistic events. We may also discover the "cultural loading" inherent in all of the words in the lexicon.

Let us take for an example the word *brick*. The attributes of the categorical concept represented would be something like building material, rectangular prism, very strong, durable, hard. We might expect, then, that a brick house would be stronger and more long-lasting than a wooden house.

However, we can go on from there into other linguistic events with *brick* as the focus. What do we mean when we say "red as a brick"? This use comes from an historico-cultural event well known to native speakers of the language from certain areas of England or America. Early bricks in these areas were almost always red, owing to the ingredients from which

they were made. However, natives of the American Southwest may have some difficulty with this phrase since the adobe brick of the southwestern United States is light brown.

We can also add the phrase "a brick of cheese" where the attributes of durable, hard, and building block scarcely apply. The shape of the usual brick does apply, at least for certain types of cheese, and it is from this shape that we obtain our term.

A once common, but now less used, term is "he's a brick." This phrase is applied to a person who is steadfast, loyal, enduring--but not necessarily rectangular of shape nor red of face. Here, again, certain categorical attributes of *brick* are used in a completely different, but entirely identifiable, context.

If we turn to the word *castle*, a similar analysis can be conducted which may lead us into even more historico-cultural twists and turns. The categorical concepts of most native speakers of English will come from mostly vicarious experiences with the castles of the European Middle Ages--and the fairy tales derived from that culture. We will envision thick walls, battlements, turrets, kings, and knights--in short, a domicile especially suited to the protection of its inhabitants.

We can now examine such phrases as "a man's home is his castle." In this case, the thick walls, moats, etc., are usually noticeably absent and, in the physical mode, an individual home may be far from our picture of a defensible home. In a legal and governmental sense, however, the most ramshackle hut may, indeed, be a castle to those living in it, and the "man of the house" may be its ruler.

Delving further, we come to such phrases as "sand castles" or "castles in the sky." These are phrases used to describe dreams which, though highly desirable, have very little basis in fact, are not durable, and certainly do not provide much defense. To get to the meanings of these phrases, we must discover the attributes of castle which are missing (strength and durability of building materials).

In summary, then, we can turn to yet another statement from Bronowski and Bellugi (1970): "In short, language expresses not a specific linguistic faculty but a constellation of faculties of the human mind." From this it follows that we can, as reading teachers, accept two basic assertions of Johnson and Pearson (1978):

(1) Whatever influences general thinking or problem solving ability also influences reading comprehension, and

(2) there are a few factors that influence reading comprehension but not thinking or problem solving.

Instruction in vocabulary development must adhere to these two principles. We must attend, certainly, to phonic and structural analysis, but the program which ignores or pays scant heed to the conceptual nature of language is doing less than half the job.

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Carl Personke chats with Co-chairpersons David Waterman and Bob Pabst.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE A MICROCOMPUTER . . .

William Linville and David C. Waterman

The age of the microcomputer is dawning. Evidence of the proliferation of microcomputers and their hardware and software is found by examining the advertisements, commercial brochures, and magazine articles available at any state or national reading conference. Of the sixty or more exhibitors at the Indiana State Council International Reading Association Conference held in Indianapolis, April 7-9, 1983, more than twenty had catalogs of microcomputer description and use. Even five years ago there would have been only three or four such catalogs available.

A look through these catalogs reveals an abundance of programs designed to help the struggling reading teacher in a variety of ways. One catalog listed programs for such things as vowels, consonants, letter recognition, opposites, roots/affixes, homonyms, antonyms, synonyms, vocabulary-Dolch, vocabulary-elementary, and word families. Another catalog contained software descriptions of programs on reading comprehension, readability, type-to-read, intermediate reading skills, and reading games. Still others listed such things as customized alphabet drill, alphabet keyboard, tutorial comprehension, fundamental phonics and word attack, fundamental word focus, and three games called *Word Blaster*, *Word Count*, and *Word Mount*. A different catalog promises a *Diagnostic-Prescriptive Tutorial Reading Program*, and another has a program on *How to Read in the Content Areas*. Acronyms for reading programs, for example, *CARIS* (Computer Animated Reading Instructional System), are found. Finally, we see coined terms such as "Diascriptive Reading."

Interest in Computer Assisted Instruction is found at the state level in Indiana. The Indiana Department of Public Instruction (IDPI) has a consultant (Michael Olds) to answer questions about Computer Assisted Instruction. There is an office in Indianapolis where at least four different microcomputers are available for demonstration purposes. Teachers wishing to learn more about Computer Assisted Instruction can visit the Microcomputer Evaluation and Resource Center (MERC) of IDPI's Division of Federal Resources and School Improvement at 3833 North Meridian Street, Indianapolis. The IDPI has also devised evaluation forms for both the microcomputers and their software programs. If your local school corporation is interested in having a consultant present ideas, the IDPI may be able to provide such help.

Indiana State University is in the process of developing ISU MICRONET, a network designed to share programs in various curriculum areas and information about computing, software, and hardware with member schools and corporations. If you teach in Indiana, your local school corporation should already have knowledge of this group. The fall semester will see this network in operation, serving member institutions throughout Indiana. Perhaps the best known group for sharing microcomputer programs at the national level is the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (MECC), a nonprofit agency formed to develop and promote computer-aided education

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in Minnesota secondary schools. Learning disabilities teachers may want to contact the Minnesota Learning Disabilities Consortium, Minnesota State Department of Education, St. Paul, for information about their programs.

A visit to your local bookstore may also reveal evidence of the proliferation of computers and programs. In Terre Haute we found both of the bookstores at Honey Creek Square Shopping Center contained special sections with collections of books and catalogs about computers. These areas were prominently marked and did indeed offer a confusing variety of such books. If you browse through these without any idea of what you really want to know, you may find the experience overwhelming. Like most new areas, the terminology is unfamiliar to the average person, and the multiple resources vary greatly in quality. Our advice is to bring along a knowledgeable friend who may be able to steer you to the particular references and resources you need in order to select the most useful books and catalogs.

Our professional associations are also supplying computer information. In our case, the International Reading Association has recently published an updated version of the popular book titled *Computer Applications in Reading* (Mason & Mason, 1983), as well as professional articles in both *The Reading Teacher* and the *Journal of Reading*. The earlier edition of *Computer Applications in Reading* was published in 1977-78, and it is apparent that the rapid expansion of programs and materials involving computers and reading has made necessary this revision. A look at recent issues of the publications of many professional organizations in education and related fields shows widespread interest in the use of computers to assist teachers in a variety of ways. The April 1983 issue of *Instructor and Teacher* magazine, introducing an article titled "Computer Countdown... Teacher Literacy," tells teachers to "Sprint, don't saunter, toward computer literacy while there's still time to lead the off-and-running computer movement" (p. 3). The March issue of this same magazine, in an article titled "A Computer Center From Scratch," suggests several ideas for putting a computer center together. Other magazines have presented a variety of articles, some of which go beyond description to the discussion of many of the issues or problems that accompany computer use. Some of these problems generate such questions as the following:

1. Are there eye-hand coordination problems that many children will not be able to solve when using computers?

2. What effects will the overuse of computers have on attention span?

3. Is much of the software offered nothing more than an electronic workbook?

4. Do many programs contain on-screen errors in spelling and directions?

5. Could an overreliance on computers diminish opportunities to remediate the deficits presented by learning disabled students?

The above problems, discussed more fully in "Microcomputers: The Other Side of the Coin" (1983), express concern about the use of microcomputers. In this same issue, there is an excellent random survey of 100 subscribers who were asked to list their positive and negative feelings about the microcomputer(s) in their schools.

A problem of copyright also is of concern to those producing microcomputer programs. While manufacturers have devised some internal methods to prevent illegal copying, there seems to be a lot of this occurring. Teachers should be aware of the appropriate copyright laws and ought to respect these laws, just as they would for tapes, records, and other copyrighted materials.

Colleges and universities are offering a bewildering variety of computer courses. These courses are shared or found in various departments and schools of the universities. There is a concerted effort to attract students to these courses, and if enrollments in such courses at Indiana State University are any indication of success, there is great interest in these courses. The summer school registration lines contained many disappointed students who found that, by the time they had arrived to register, the computer classes were full and had been closed. Unfortunately, such courses require equipment to use in teaching and learning, and the enrollments have to be limited in terms of the equipment available.

Coupled with high interest is the concern that some teachers feel in not knowing what to expect from computers as far as instructional improvements are concerned. Teachers don't want to be left behind; they want to explore every possible advantage a computer might offer. Thus, the issue of how reading skills might be improved through Computer Assisted Instruction is a valid one. However, programs for Computer Assisted Instruction go beyond providing practice in basic skills, as the titles of many programs indicate. Teachers are faced with a bewildering variety of claims, some of which, like the reading methods of the '60s, might be without real substance.

There are some specific things that computer programs can do in the nature of "housekeeping" chores. For example, software exists that permits you to enter so many words from a text or trade book, and then the computer will produce, using a variety of reading formulas, a readability score or scores for that particular text. Since such data are not usually given for either trade books or textbooks, a teacher could use this program to determine readability levels. However, we should note that a sample of sentences from a textbook is just that, and it is possible that readability will vary from one part of a book to another. This would be especially true if the book has several contributing authors. Some teachers might prefer to take three or four random samples from the text to check reliability, even if the text is by a single author. The term "readability" is ambiguous since there is no guarantee that a pupil at a given reading level will necessarily understand a particular passage. Reading comprehension is dependent upon a number of factors outside the scope of a readability formula. One such factor would certainly be the reader's previous experiences with the concept(s) being presented and described in the text. The point is that what the program promises to deliver (and probably does deliver) is not necessarily going to guarantee that the pupil can adequately "read" what is there.

Other housekeeping chores that a computer can help with are keeping track of groups of pupils, storing information about these pupils, and, through the manipulation of variables, showing different possibilities for rearranging the pupils in terms of specific criteria. Such a storage system would eliminate a lot of paperwork, although the entering of data into the computer would require time and thought. Here the essential question is to determine what data to enter and how, once entered, the data are to be manipulated for various purposes. The saying "garbage in,

garbage out" would apply in this instance. Most conscientious teachers already have devised data-keeping systems, and these have been in use long before computers were available. Transferring such systems to a format suitable for computer storage would not seem to be too great a task. Such record-keeping systems could be useful in grouping children for various purposes, for comparison of test scores, for determining improvement in specific skill areas, and for identifying significant variables that might influence a child's progress in any given area. I am confident a creative teacher could devise other uses for this type of program as well.

The catalogs for computer software describe many game-like programs designed to maintain and enhance skills while presenting an interesting format. One advantage of the computer games over workbook-type activities is that the pupil has an opportunity to play against the computer itself. Through random responses the computer can be programmed to "guess," while at the same time having a penalty assessed for incorrect guesses. An example of such a program is "Don't Fall," developed for the Apple computer. In this game a child selects a category of words to spell. He can do it by himself or play against the computer. We have used this game with children in elementary school classrooms and also with teachers in training. Both groups find it stimulating to play against the computer, and it appears that their interest is maintained over a long period of time. If such programs make drill and practice fun, we ought to use them whenever practical.

This presentation is intended to introduce you to the world of the microcomputer in education. Is it any wonder that teachers are perplexed, bothered, and bewildered! Questions naturally arise. Twenty years ago such questions might have revolved around the many new methods of teaching reading that were being developed. For example, we were talking about individualized reading, programmed reading, the language-experience approach, and even something called the linguistic method. In addition, there were programs like *Words in Color*, the *Initial Teaching Alphabet*, and *Unifon*. The passage of time has rendered some of our questions obsolete, and others have been raised. Teachers have been searching for the catchall answer to teaching reading for a long time, and we have not yet found it. Some authorities would argue that there is no such answer, yet the computer age promises much. What will be delivered remains to be seen.

Included in this presentation is a demonstration of some of the reading programs on software. We hope that a direct experience will show you that it is easy to enter these programs into your computer, and that children can, with a minimum amount of instruction and practice, use them easily. Finally, we have listed some of the companies offering catalog descriptions of programs, and a few of the many magazine articles describing computers and the issues that revolve around the selection of appropriate program materials. Our hope is that this will stimulate you to learn more about this rapidly developing field. Whet your appetite on this demonstration, and seek out those who can help you find the answers to the questions that will surely arise.

COMPANIES OFFERING COMPUTER CATALOGS

1. Britannica (Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation)
   425 North Michigan Avenue
   Chicago, Illinois 60611

2. Computer Courseware Services (a division of EMC Publishing/*Changing Times* Educational Service)
   217 York Avenue
   St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

3. Educational Activities, Inc.
   PO Box 392
   Freeport, New York 11520

4. Hartley Software Shop
   Modular Educational Programs
   PO Box 100 Vine Road
   Tyner, Indiana 46572

5. Houghton Mifflin Microcourse
   1900 South Batavia Avenue
   Geneva, Illinois 60134

6. Macmillan (Series r: Macmillan Reading, Computerized Instructional Management System)
   866 Third Avenue
   New York, New York 10022

   Also, Macmillan has published a newsletter titled "The Seminar" which is free. This publication offers several articles on computers and their use in the classroom.

7. Milton Bradley Educational Software: "Finding the answer was never more fun."

   Milton Bradley Company
   Springfield, Massachusetts 01101

8. Random House (School Division, Microcomputer Courseware Catalog)
   Department 9062
   400 Hahn Road
   Westminster, Maryland 21157

9. Skillcorp. Software, Inc.
   1711 McGaw Avenue
   Irvine, California 92714

10. SVE '83 (Microcomputer Software, K-12)
    Society for Visual Education
    1345 Diversey Parkway
    Chicago, Illinois 60614

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Microcomputers: The other side of the coin. *Academic Therapy*, May 1983, pp. 517-538.

Speakers David Waterman and Bill Linville.

WRITING FOR READING: LISTENING TO THE FLIP SIDE

Catherine Baker

Educators have traditionally been concerned with the teaching of reading and writing, since these skills are not only two-thirds of the three Rs but also the skills necessary in order to study almost any other academic subject. Literacy, in fact, has been considered the hallmark of civilized man. McLuhan (1964) argued that ". . . the phonetic alphabet, alone, is the technology that has been the means of creating 'civilized man' . . ." (p. 86). If he is correct, teachers of reading and writing carry the burden of the preservation of civilization.

Just how to best perform the duties of this trust, however, has been the occasion for much dissension among educators. Although reading and writing have been taught for centuries, teachers have yet to reach any consensus about the most appropriate methods or to find a great deal of empirical proof to link causes and effects in instructional methods or materials. Most methods and materials have been shown to be successful in some instances and to fail in others. New ideas for teaching reading and writing have too often degenerated into quickly passing fads, creating an atmosphere of action and reaction rather than an atmosphere of stable growth and development.

Any investigation into the cause and effect relationships between reading and writing must be philosophically concerned with the attitude or world view demanded by literacy and the interrelationships among the four language functions: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. McLuhan pointed out that the easily acquired literacy generated by the phonetic alphabet fragmented man's perception and representation of his experience into linear, sequential form in which abstract symbols arbitrarily represented individual sound components of words. He also indicated that this linear fragmentation has created many of the basic patterns found in Western culture and that such linear patterns have become the mark of logic and reason (pp. 84-90). Linear sequentialization has become a basic ingredient not only of mechanical, technological, and commercial life, but also of social organization. Thus, literacy demands an accommodation with the linear, sequential world view and an understanding of the patterns operating therein.

Of equal concern are the interrelationships among the four language functions. Writing is both more and less than speaking--more in terms of intent and audience and less in terms of sound. By the same token, reading bears the same relationship to listening. Further, just as speaking and listening are man's primary modes of communication, writing and reading are secondary ones, parallel to the primary modes but having as their principal advantage the ability to communicate across time and space. Just as speaking and listening are natural human functions, writing and reading are artificial functions which must be taught, for people do not master them without specialized instruction.

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But in the teaching of these skills it is important that specialization does not lead to separation of functions which are essentially similar. Most of the current thought about holistic language education is found in the writing of composition theorists. In an excellent article in *College English*, Rose (1983) decried the separation of writing from reading and thinking and explained that

> . . . reading and writing are different processes, but it is simply not true that they are unconnected. Anthony Petrosky explains how current theories present reading as a kind of "composing process"; people construct meaning from text rather than passively internalize it. Teun Van Dijk points out that while we need to know the conventions, structures, and intentions of particular discourses to produce them, we likewise need such knowledge to comprehend them . . . . Reading and writing are intimately connected in ways we are only beginning to understand. (pp. 118-119)

Similarly, Peterson (1982) pointed out that

> Recent research in composition combined with the theoretical contribution of reader-response critics in literature suggests a possible unified theory of reading, interpretation and composition. The theory derives from the research of James Britton and Linda Flower in composition and of David Bleich and Louise Rosenblatt in reading. All four of these theorists posit the existence of an affective/personal language matrix which shapes experience into knowledge. . . . This personal matrix at the heart of the reading and writing process implies that reading and writing are connected thinking processes which derive from similar, if not identical mental structures. . . . All argue that we process experience through personal associations, prior cognitive schemes, previous emotional responses, and private images or memories. When we sit down to compose or read something, we begin our organization and discovery of meaning through this matrix. (pp. 460-461)

While Peterson proposed a pedagogical model which integrates literary studies with composition, Miller (1983) presented a model of a writing event which "may also suggest both a static and dynamic description of reading. Whether seen as an analytical mode that provides a reading or interpretation, or as an individual process, 'reading' depends on all these contextual and textual elements" (pp. 230-231), these elements being divided into 3 main categories: history, situation, and text. This model presents a theoretical basis for an integrated study of the *processes* of reading and writing as well as for their curricular integration.

It is the contention of this paper, then, that any good teacher of reading must be a teacher of writing as well. For the teacher of reading, classroom writing activities serve two basis functions. The first of these is a descriptive function that aids in the analysis and diagnosis of reading ability. Some reading behaviors may become evident only through writing activities and, thus, never really show up on standardized tests, which often show what a student cannot do but do not indicate what he is doing. Although few experts in the field of reading diagnosis ever recommend it, writing is a significant indicator of the faulty *process* at work when a student has reading problems. And it is *process*

which must be of concern in diagnosis. Bettleheim and Zalen (1981) pointed out, at rather great length, the significance of error in reading behavior, and while they approached remediation of reading difficulties from a psychoanalytic point of view, a great deal of their subjects being children with varying degrees of emotional disturbance, their ideas of the importance of the context of error are certainly applicable in many cases of faulty reading. Unlike behavioral psychologists, who generally are interested in ends rather than means, reading teachers must be equally interested in ends *and* means, for even when it is obvious what a child can or cannot do, it is often impossible to help the child without knowing why he does it. Process, then, is the significant focus of analysis. And the careful use of writing activities can help to describe the process at work in a student's reading.

Some of the reading problems which may be identified through writing activities are these:

1. Writing activities may indicate the presence of a learning disability
   a) Inability to sustain a writing activity more than a few minutes
   b) Uncoordinated, disjointed handwriting
   c) Inability to write in a straight line, even on lined paper
   d) Very rapid handwriting
   e) Very small handwriting
   f) Great pressure on the tip of the writing instrument, often to the point of making holes in the paper or breaking the pencil
   g) Inability to handle spacial-sequential tasks; e.g., misspellings or reversals, rotations, inversions, or transpositions of letters
   h) Words spelled both correctly and incorrectly in close proximity
   i) Endings, letters or syllables, left off words
   j) Whole syllables missing from words
   k) Strange or awkward head or body positions when writing
   l) Occasional words omitted from otherwise normal syntax
   m) Left-handedness (significant only in combination with reading disorders)
2. Writing behaviors may indicate dialect problems which would interfere with comprehension.
3. Writing behaviors may indicate problems in grammar and syntax of bilingual students.
4. Writing will give an indication of reading vocabulary level.
5. Writing will indicate ability to use logical progression and adaptation to a linear world view.
6. Writing samples will often indicate a lack of experiential background for reading comprehension.

Because a student's writing behaviors display so vividly his strengths and weaknesses in regard to language, it seems unfortunate that most texts in use for the training of reading teachers disregard writing almost entirely and most English teachers are taught a great deal about teaching literary criticism, punctuation, and grammar and little about the kind of disabilities student writing can demonstrate.

But writing activities serve not only a descriptive function but a prescriptive one as well. Writing, in fact, is one of the very best ways to learn language. Those who can recall how much easier it always was to translate French or Latin to English than it was to translate English to French or Latin will appreciate this truth. Writing not only aids in the development of standard English usage and syntax but also helps readers to see the structure of written language in such a way as to make its content and intent immediately identifiable. Certain rhetorical structures, for example, are meant to convey certain definite ideas, and those who are aware of those structures know exactly what to look for in order to comprehend the passage. Further, such rhetorical structures are actually modes of rational thought, albeit the linear-sequential ones of which McLuhan spoke. If a student from an oral culture background with a holistic world view has not been acculturated to the linear-sequential cognitive world of the printed word, he will not read with much comprehension, and he will do poorly on essay exams, regardless of how much he knows.

However, learning to write teaches students more than the standard rhetorical thought patterns. It also teaches them the conventions of written language. It teaches them, for instance, about transitions, thesis sentences, introductions, and summaries, all of which is invaluable in the process of selecting main ideas and supporting material in order to comprehend a passage.

Writing activities also aid greatly in vocabulary development by helping students to distinguish between homonyms (there, their, they're), learn to use synonyms, and circumvent dialect pronunciation errors (still/steel, pin/pen) which interfere with comprehension in reading. Using a thesaurus in conjunction with a writing activity is one way to introduce new words of a student's own choice.

In addition, writing activities aid in the retention of material and, thus, do double duty in content area classes by helping students both to understand and to remember. Once again, it has often been the case that writing activities are thought to be the province of the English teacher and many content area teachers are satisfied to give multiple-choice exams and require no papers. Such persons perhaps do not write well themselves and so feel uncomfortable with assigning writing, or perhaps they do not realize that memory is enhanced by multiple sensory input (seeing, touching, hearing, saying) and by the organization inherent in writing.

Finally, writing activities teach at least one more valuable lesson: They remove the mystery of the printed word and thus alleviate the fear of it often found in poor readers. When a student learns how to put together a good sentence or paragraph or essay, he begins to feel more equal to the writers of his texts, he begins to see that material in print was not set forth by God, and he begins to evaluate what he reads with a more critical attitude. He also gains confidence in regard to written discourse: "If I can write it, I can read it, too." Printed material becomes

a familiar and meaningful area because he recognizes the signals therein. He feels in control of the reading process rather than controlled by the print on the page.

Almost any sort of writing activity will enhance a student's reading ability. These are some specific writing activities that may be used with many different age groups:

1. Language experience (Newman & Parer, 1978)
2. Copying or writing to dictation
3. Writing about pictures
4. Outlining
5. Writing summaries, precis, paraphrases (D'Angelo, 1983)
6. Sentence combining (Crowhurst, 1983)
7. Writing in the rhetorical modes (Meyer, 1977,1979)
   a) Narration
   b) Argumentation
   c) Description
   d) Exposition
      (1) Cause-effect
      (2) Comparison-contrast
      (3) Classification
      (4) Definition
      (5) Analogy
8. Writing inductively and deductively
9. Writing about reading assignments to develop critical reading-thinking and study skills*
   a) Recall tasks
      (1) Write from memory names of characters, times and places of actions
      (2) Write from memory main ideas of paragraphs or longer selections
      (3) Write the order of incidents in a given selection
      (4) Write about likenesses or differences in characters or actions
      (5) Write about stated reasons for events in a selection
      (6) Write about statements which delineate character type
   b) Reorganization tasks
      (1) Write a paragraph categorizing people, things, or places
      (2) Outline a reading selection

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*These skills were outlines by the Western Michigan University Learning Center Staff.

(3) Condense a selection

(4) Consolidate ideas or information from more than one source

(5) Discuss the main idea, general significance, theme, or moral implied in a selection

(6) Predict the outcome of an incomplete reading selection

(7) Write a clear sketch based on clues presented in a reading selection

(8) Hypothesize about the motivations of characters

(9) Write an addenda to a reading selection which would add other information or interest

(10) Discuss why an author decided to include certain ideas, words, etc., in a selection

(11) Discuss the author's use of figurative language

c) Judgement tasks, evaluation tasks

(1) Discuss a selection in light of personal experience

(2) Analyze a selection on the basis of prior knowledge

(3) Analyze the author's intent

(4) Verify facts

(5) Discuss whether the information justifies the conclusion

(6) Discuss whether a character's decision or action was right or wrong based on personal value systems

The implications of the greater integration of reading and writing activities in both reading and content area classrooms are several. The first few concern teacher education. Persons planning to teach should be required to take more composition classes than are required at present, and English and reading teachers should take classes in the teaching of composition. Very likely persons who cannot achieve a respectable verbal score on some measure such as the GRE should be barred from teaching. The second few concern the conditions of teacher employment. The student-to-teacher ratio should be much smaller in order to give teachers time to require and mark writing assignments. Teachers should be encouraged to use essay examinations. Students should have books they can take to study hall, take home, and mark in, so that writing assignments related to reading assignments will be possible.

Research, experience, and intuition all seem to indicate that holistic language instruction is far superior to fragmented specialization of skills. Reading teachers need to systematically include writing activities in their instructional programs; content area teachers need to integrate writing with reading assignments; and school systems need to give them the time to do it.

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Co-chairperson Bob Pabst introduces the Conference keynote speaker.

He that loves reading has everything within his reach.

Goodwin

READING POETRY: BACK TO THE BASICS

James Mullican

I purposely built some ambiguity into my title. I did this for a reason: I had to supply a title long before I wrote this paper, so I wanted to give myself some room to maneuver. I also wanted to build a minor bit of shock value into the title, since some people might consider the title and the subtitle to be contradictory. (Since this is a talk on poetry, I suppose that I should call this apparent contradiction by its poetic name, an *oxymoron*. This talk may, then, be oxymoronic, but, I hope, not moronic.) Some people consider poetry a frill in the language arts classroom, in opposition to such "solid" basics as spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and (to give you a preview of coming attractions) I hope to contradict the notion that poetry is a frill.

By the way, I believe that I have perhaps reaped an undeserved bonanza by including "basics" in my title, since that term has again become prominent in the news, following the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Even Terrel H. Bell, the Secretary of Education, who has from the outset of his term worked for the abolition of his own department, now says that education will be a major issue in the 1984 Presidential campaign. While Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, will no doubt fight like cats and dogs about the degree of support for education and the nature of schooling, all will no doubt support the basics. Everybody supports the basics; the argument comes when we define the term and work out its implications for education. Then our basics become the bad guys' frills, and vice versa.

I must share with you what are my basics in education and in the language arts. I consider learning to use the language arts to be the ultimate basic in education. Nothing is more basic to human beings than language, since language distinguishes us from all other beings on this planet. All human beings in all cultures have language, but no other animals do. Language is essential for forming our ideas and communicating with one another; it is essential for building cultures and societies. Within the English and language arts classroom, there is nothing more basic than learning to use the language arts of listening, reading, speaking, writing, and reasoning in language. Our students become proficient in the language arts by *using* these arts, not by learning facts *about* language.

After this brief preamble, I would like to relate the idea of "basics" to reading poetry in the classroom by addressing the following three questions:

1. Is poetry basic to human beings and human culture?
2. What is basic in poetry?
3. How can we help kids acquire the basics of poetry?

James Mullican is Professor of English at Indiana State University.

After giving my answers to these questions, I hope to make some suggestions for treating poetry in the English and language arts classroom.

Is poetry basic to human beings and human culture?

It will surprise no one that my answer is yes, for the following reasons:

1. All societies that we know about--including primitive ones--have had some form of poetry. All cultures have songs, chants, proverbs, ballads, and folktales; these pre-literate forms are early forms of poetry.

2. Some scholars even suggest that poetry is the basic stuff of language, out of which expository prose developed. These scholars speculate that metaphor, an important element of poetry, is basic to the development of language and that language itself developed out of song, chant, dance, and drama, and not out of sheer information giving.

3. Poetry, in the forms of ritual, proverbs, and prayers, may be an important part of the glue that holds society together, by helping people to share attitudes, values, and goals.

4. Poetry may be no less useful in advanced pluralistic democracies than in primitive societies. Poetry helps us develop our imaginations by giving us vicarious experience and helping us to see the world as others see it. Poems by black writers and feminist writers, for example, offer us opportunities to understand the aspirations of those who have too often been neglected by our society.

5. In a free, democratic society, it is important to think critically about issues and values. Poetry offers opportunities to see our situation from fresh perspectives. Since poets tend to see the world from their own unique perspectives, poetry offers insights not available to those whose ideas are formed exclusively by the mass media. (W.H. Auden's poem, "The Unknown Citizen," portrays graphically the dull life of one who has political freedom, but who conforms to patterns of living presented by commercial and political interests.)

I would be the first to grant that poetry is not basic to making a living in our society or in fulfilling the routine duties of citizenship. Poetry may even make us a bit less tractable for those who would exploit us for their own advantage. But I would hold that poetry is basic to full human development and helpful for developing a thoughtful, discerning, and creative citizenship.

What is basic in poetry?

Before answering this question, I'd like to point out what is *not* basic in poetry. Over the years, I have noticed that many students entering my class for the first time think that "deep meanings" are basic to poetry, meanings that only teachers can interpret. These students often feel that poetry has complexities and subtleties that they are unable to unravel. I have actually heard such students groan after hearing the word *poetry*.

For a brief time after I began to teach English, I had an erroneous notion of what was basic to the study of poetry. Since I believed that learning poetic terminology was basic to the study of poetry, I would ditto several pages of terms, such as *oxymoron* and *alliteration*, for students to learn, and I was surprised that students reacted so negatively to poetry. I quickly learned that poetry is not best approached through terminology and a listing of poetic devices.

After thinking, reading, and teaching for a number of years, I have come to quite a different view of what is basic in poetry. *Basically*, poetry is not an academic enterprise. As S.J. Sackett pointed out in "Poetry and Folklore: Some Points of Affinity" (1964), poetry is a development and elaboration of basic forms and techniques found in the folklore of all societies, including those that do not have written languages. According to Sackett,

> Poetry is not, therefore, an artificial thing, floating on the upper surfaces of a civilization; it is something which arises from and appeals to some of the basic elements of human nature. It may perhaps be said against poetry in some quarters that it is kept alive only by academicians, that if it were left to ordinary people, poetry would disappear. That is simply untrue. Certain specific poems may be kept alive only in the ivory tower, but poetry itself is not.

Basically, then, I think poetry is not merely an academic exercise. Complex, subtle, sophisticated written poems are but elaborations of simple oral forms: chants to accompany work or play, jokes, stories, riddles, proverbs, songs, words to accompany rituals, and prayers. I am sure my list is not complete, but it is a start.

It is clear, to me at least, that these simple forms fulfill basic human needs. Children learn and create chants to accompany jump-rope games; adults create songs and chants to accompany hard labor. Jokes appear in the folklore of all cultures for a variety of reasons: possibly to gain revenge against oppressors, to reduce the importance of troubles, to relieve tension. Stories entertain us and communicate attitudes and values important to our group. Riddles are entertaining mental games that give us the pleasure of outsmarting our friends. Proverbs inculcate useful values and counsel action for the benefit of soceity. Rituals and prayers help us to see human significance in the rhythms of the day and the seasons and to bring ourselves into some accord with the universe.

How can we help kids acquire the basics of poetry?

Obviously, people acquire the basics of poetry--chants, songs, jokes, stories, riddles, proverbs, rituals, and prayers--without benefit of schooling. For learning poetry--a more sophisticated written elaboration of these simple oral forms--schooling is helpful.

My most important goal in introducing poetry into the classroom is to induce students to like poetry. To achieve this goal, we must see that students have pleasant experiences with poetry. Our instruction is successful if students read poetry with enjoyment and understanding long

after they leave school. Some students will, in addition, write poetry. All other goals--knowledge of techniques, mastery of facts about poems and poets--must be subordinate to this one: to help students like poetry. The following suggestions may be helpful in our efforts to help students read and write poetry with enjoyment.

1. The classroom should be a place where students *do* poetry: listen to poems, read poems, and write poems. Learning about poems--terminology, biography of poets--should be imported only incidentally.

2. Perhaps we can make poetry more accessible by removing the aura of academic stuffiness from the study of poetry. One way to achieve this goal is by relating specific poems to the basic simple forms mentioned above. Poetry is more approachable when considered as jokes, stories, or riddles. Sackett was correct when he wrote this observation: "because most students are acquainted with some folklore, the use of these poetic devices is familiar to them, and the teacher of literature can use this familiarity to lead his students to a better and firmer understanding of poetry" (p. 142).

3. Read aloud to students poems that you like, perhaps under the categories of chants, songs, jokes, stories, riddles, proverbs, rituals, and prayers. Some examples of joke poems may be found in Richard Armour's *Writing Light Verse* (1947/1958). Light verse may also be found in many magazines, including Sunday supplements of newspapers. Story poems may be found in any school anthology. Some examples of story poems include Robert Frost's "Death of the Hired Man," Charles Edward Carryl's "Robinson Crusoe's Story," Harry Lee Marriner's "A Lady in Distress," many poems by Robert Service, any poem in Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*.

A word needs to be said about using joke poems and story poems, and I begin with questions. How do you like for someone to explain the point of a joke to you? How do you like for someone to narrate the plot of a movie for you? I don't like for jokes to be explained or plots to be narrated. Yet we explain joke poems and we retell narrative poems. I suspect that we need to learn that not every poem needs to be taught. Just reading it aloud is sufficient for most joke and story poems.

4. Riddle poems need more attention, as I pointed out in my essay, "Solving the Poetry Riddle" (1983). We may begin with May Swenson's charming little book, *Poems To Solve* (1966), and ask our students to guess the subject matter of each poem. We may then proceed to more difficult poems and ask students to solve some puzzling aspect of a poem, such as the subject matter of a puzzling poem or the kind of character who seems to be narrating the poem. Students must "prove" the validity of their answers by citing evidence from the poem, as Laurence Perrine (1962) suggests in his "The Nature of Proof in the Interpretation of Poetry."

5. Ask students to collect poems that *they* like from magazines, books, newspapers. Ask them to share their poems by reading them aloud to the class or posting them on the bulletin board.

6. After students listen to poems and read poems, ask them to write poems, using the poems as models. Kenneth Koch (1973), in his *Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?*, showed how he was able to get his elementary pupils to read published poems with understanding by having his pupils write

poetry, with great poems as models. Writing poetry certainly helps students to read poetry with greater understanding and appreciation.

7. Terminology and poetic devices should not be taught all at once and separately from the actual reading of poems. Terminology may be introduced incidentally as we talk about poems, and poetic devices may be introduced as students encounter problems in reading and writing poems.

8. I make the following proposal with fear and trembling and with a willingness to be talked out of it. Considering that so many high-school and college students confess to hating poetry, perhaps any practices would be better than what we now do. Perhaps we should abolish units on poetry and instead have poetry *days* in which students and teachers share poems that they like with one another. There would be no tests over poems "covered" on those days. Poetry days could be considered as "goof-off" days that students would look forward to as respites from what the school considers more important business.

9. Found a literary magazine for your class or for the entire school. Make poetry writing a prestigious activity by giving student poets the chance to be published and read.

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SANS SCINTILLATING SALESMANSHIP SKILLS, READING CENTERS SAG

Robert Arnett

An old saying in the "sales" business is: "Nothing happens until somebody sells something." It would seem that this adage applies to the teaching of reading as well.

The reading teacher has a number of sales to make if his/her program is to succeed. Some of those prospects who must be sold are the school corporation's administration, the school's principal and vice principal, content teachers, students' parents, and, most importantly, the students themselves.

The school corporation's administration must be sold on the breadth and depth of the reading curriculum, otherwise manpower, materials, and supplies could be minimal. Although this would appear to be an "automatic" sale, recent experience has proven otherwise.

School principals must be sold on the school's reading program if the proper amount of emphasis is to be placed on it. After all, the principal will determine the number of reading classes available and to whom they will be offered.

Classroom teachers are sometimes reluctant buyers because of their attitudes toward poor readers. Their feelings may range from a total lack of sympathy for students who do not read well to a sympathetic understanding toward them and their problems. Many content teachers feel that students who do not complete their assignments simply do not try. Others do not involve themselves in investigating the causes of student failures, whatever those causes might be.

Parents of reading students need to be sold not only on what the school will strive to do to improve their children's reading skills, but also on what they as parents may do at home to reinforce what is being done in the classroom. Many times parents will not give permission for their sons and daughters to be placed in remedial or special education courses. The losers in these situations are the students who often cannot succeed in regular school classes.

The parallels that may be drawn between the "art" of teaching reading and the "art" of selling are numerous. In fact, in the secondary reading laboratory where reluctant readers abound, sales skills may be just as important as teaching skills if the overall program is to be successful.

The majority of students who enter the secondary reading classroom have a record of failures. Not only have they failed to learn to read adequately, but they have become conditioned to failure. Many have decided that there is absolutely no way to succeed in comprehending the printed page. Their self-concepts have been affected by their inabilities, and they have concluded that they cannot "learn."

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The threat of failing grades as a "fear motivator" for reading students who will not do assignments is of almost no value whatsoever. Most of them have received failing grades on numerous occasions, and they will be unaffected by the possibility of one more *F*. They may, however, be sold on the premise that they could receive good grades (*A*s and *B*s) in their reading class. This possibility may be met with disbelief at first, but when the means by which these grades may be achieved is explained, and sold, an entirely different attitude may be created. More will be said about this later.

The successful sales presentation often involves a "demonstration" of the product to the prospective buyer. Why don't we demonstrate to the reading students the fact that they most certainly can learn? The tachistoscope is a teaching tool that can do just that. Automatically, it can allow students to widen their span of perception, improve visual memory and, thereby, dramatically increase reading speed.

I have concluded that a great number of students are reluctant readers because they read extremely slowly, so slowly, in fact, that they would do anything rather than read. If these students can be sold on the idea that by increasing their reading rate, on a flexible basis, to two, three, or even four times as fast they would be able to complete reading assignments in a fraction of the time it formerly took them, they would then be more willing to undertake those reading assignments. Further, there is some research which indicates that an increase in reading speed can, in certain materials, improve comprehension. This would seem to be true when reading lengthy sentences.

When selling the reluctant reader on increasing reading speed, visual memory exercises are an excellent place to begin. Improving visual memory allows the student to read faster and more fluidly. One test to determine a person's reading ability is to have the subject read aloud, then abruptly cover the reading material and determine how many more words the reader can say. This is a visual memory test. The more words the reader remembers correctly, the better his/her reading ability.

Let's look at a visual memory exercise which utilizes numbers. The students are asked to look at a series of numbers projected by the tachistoscope for a measured amount of time. They are encouraged to look at or fixate their eyes on the number or numbers in the middle of the series and then to recall those numbers after they have been flashed. In a relatively short period of time, most students will improve their visual memories to a marked degree. Some may object, stating that numbers are not words. While this is certainly true, transferring the visual perception fundamental from numbers to words does not present a problem.

Span of perception is another exercise that will allow students to perceive more words in a single fixation. Many readers fixate and read one word at a time. This habit not only slows reading speed to a crawl, but also makes for boring reading. Imagine taking twelve-inch steps for your entire life.

After proving to your students they can widen their spans of perception and improve their visual memories, it is time to transfer what they have learned to printed words by means of words and phrases film strips designed for use with the tachistoscope. These word tests are graded and offer students the opportunity to practice reading phrases in a single fixation.

One bonus offered by perceptual training is that it is enjoyable. Students learn faster and easier when a "game" atmosphere is created. The tachistoscope and visual perception training films offer just such an atmosphere. Students can be sold on the value of perceptual training. They can determine for themselves the benefits they have received, and they can transfer the benefits to other reading skills regardless of what their reading level might be.

The final sales presentation for students is promoting the use of a machine which will control the rate of words appearing on the screen so that a student may determine the number of words he/she can read effectively. A quiz is always utilized in conjunction with reading rate exercises in order to be sure that students are reading quickly and are understanding what they have read.

Selling reading students on completing assignments can be one of the "hardest sales" the reading teacher is asked to make. Whenever possible, the students should have a choice in determining just which assignments they will actually complete. With a variety of reading materials available in the classroom, it is not difficult to offer a choice from two or three different assignments, all of which cover the same objectives. This freedom of choice seems to create a much better attitude on the part of students.

Another seemingly insignificant detail, but one that makes a marked effect on the student, is that of "skipping around." Basically, the student is allowed to skip from exercise to exercise. In fact, it is a good idea to ask students to do perhaps 20 out of the 25 exercises they may be assigned as long as all the exercises are on the same level of difficulty. This opportunity for students to pick and choose their own assignments can do wonders for a poor attitude. In the individualized reading classroom, the fundamentals of "picking and choosing" should not be overlooked.

Earlier it was stated that threats of failing grades fell on deaf ears of reading students, but the opportunity to make good grades caused those same ears to "tune in." When contracts are utilized in the reading classroom, each student will know exactly how much of what will be required for a specific grade. When these contracts are entered into, students may have a choice of materials, especially after they have had an opportunity to work in various materials on their respective grade levels. The majority of the reading they will do will be at their independent level, because frustration is the primary result of using reading materials which are far too difficult.

In many cases, public-school systems have fostered their own problems in reading by a shortsighted approach regarding their language arts curriculum. Tradition has overshadowed utility, and legions of reluctant readers have been spawned. The emphasis placed on reading during the past ten years has made a significant difference for reluctant and disabled readers. The battle may never be won, unconditionally, therefore, the need for the reading teacher to "keep on selling."

Speakers Robert Arnett and Catherine Baker.

Learning is weightless . . . a treasure you carry easily.

Chinese proverb

LISTEN TO MY IDEAS AND I WILL READ: A CASE FOR KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCES

Jan McCarthy

Learning to read dominates discussions when parents and teachers engage in dialogue related to school. This is understandable and certainly a judicious concern; however, the focus on the product--in this case, reading--often becomes the major issue, and the key element in this production--the child--is overlooked.

This afternoon I would like to share some thoughts with you about building the foundations for reading and especially focus on the way the young child acquires information and how all curriculum areas contribute to skills and attitudes associated with the reading process. Additionally, I will call attention to some of the interferences that complicate the establishment of programs designed with the developmental needs of young children as a focus.

First, I would like to take you on a visit to two kindergarten classrooms. As the children arrived for another busy day in Ms. Green's kindergarten, I recorded the actual conversation of the children and the scenario sounded like this.

"Morning, Ms. Green, look what I brought. My grandpa took me to a baseball game and bought this cap for me. It says ST. LOUIS CARDINALS. Where are the rest of the kids? I want to show them my cap."

"Here's an egg shell, teacher, that I found on the way to school. Could we keep it for our science table? And can I tell everyone about it when we get together on the rug?"

"Hi, where's the boards and our space boat that you said we could finish building today?"

"Is this the day we get to go to the puppet show?"

"Here are the library books, Ms. Green. I liked the one about the turtle the best."

"Where's Jennifer? Is she coming today? I must tell her something."

"Oooooow, what's that stuff on the art table? Could I make something?"

"Ms. Green, Ms. Green, look, look, mommy brought my new baby sister for you to see. It's Sara and she cries a lot and she doesn't have any hair either."

"I think I better remind you right now that I'm supposed to feed the guinea pig today. Here's a bag of carrots and lettuce."

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The remainder of the arrivals reflected the same kind of enthusiasm and interest in what was happening in that particular kindergarten classroom as well as what was happening in the lives of the children.

In recording the arrival conversation in another kindergarten classroom the scenario was somewhat different.

"Hi, teacher."

"Hi, Miss Wood."

"I'm here Miss Wood, what can I do?"

"Hi, teacher."

"Hi, teacher, look what I have."

"Hi, teacher."

"Good morning, Miss Wood."

You have heard only the conversation of the children, not the teachers' interactions, and you have not seen the classrooms; however, I am sure that you know a great deal about what is happening in each of the rooms. We know that Ms. Green:

1. values things that are important to the child (the baseball cap);
2. values children's discoveries, finds a place for found treasures in the classroom, and turns these discoveries into shared learning experiences with the other children (the egg);
3. encourages children's projects and makes provisions for saving unfinished work for a future time (the space boat);
4. makes provisions for extending learning outside the classroom and linking home and school together (returning library books);
5. shows a sincere interest in each child and his family (the new baby);
6. encourages children to assume responsibility for the care of their classroom and pets (feeding the guinea pig);
7. plans new experiences for children (the art activity center and puppet show);
8. encourages children to express their thoughts and interests; and
9. creates an atmosphere that attracts children like a magnet.

Miss Wood's room had a quiet and rather reserved atmosphere. The teacher-child relationships were warm but subdued. The children were kindly directed to various activity centers as they arrived--looking at books, working puzzles, tracing cutouts and coloring the tracings, or cutting pictures of things beginning with the letter *t* from magazines and

pasting them on a sheet of paper. Children were rotated from center to center until they had completed each task. The remainder of the day's activities were completed as a total group. The teacher read a story, involved the children in conducting a science demonstration and discussion, and distributed a number activity workbook sheet and a reading readiness workbook page that emphasized the letter *t*.

Two questions arise as one reflects on these two scenarios. *Why does the content of kindergarten programs vary so greatly? Why do teachers differ so much in their approaches to teaching and learning?*

To respond to these two questions, a look into the past is enlightening. Our practices often have roots that are attached to a knowledge base that is no longer valid. When the idea of readiness programs came into existence for first graders, it was viewed as a solution to all of the reading problems. This resulted in the approach that readiness programs would be good for everybody, ready or not. Teachers were suddenly expected to offer a readiness program without a clear understanding of what it meant; therefore, the wave of workbooks which soon appeared on the market was greeted with enthusiasm.

Many of the readiness workbooks were published by the publishers of readiness tests. The content of the workbooks closely paralleled the content of tests. They were filled with paper-and-pencil tasks that dealt with visual and auditory discrimination, vocabulary development, and comprehension proficiency. The assumptions upon which the tasks were based were weak and illogical. No research on how children learn supports these materials, products of the 1930s. It is rather amazing that this approach to building a foundation for reading has been so influential for several decades without documentation of a positive correlation between mastering these tasks and success in reading.

The question, What motivates educators to choose packaged workbook programs for kindergarten? is indeed curious. The answer is not clear since the choice is not based on research findings. No single response is sufficient; however, several factors should be cited as contributing to the plight. School practices change slowly; teachers, administrators, and parents do not depart from lifelong practices easily. Typically school administrators have not studied the growth and development of young children and lack understanding of the cognitive processes of kindergarten-aged children. Also child psychologists brought very little new information about human development and learning styles to the field between 1920 and 1960. Additionally for the teacher lacking in ideas, enthusiasm, and understanding, prepared instructional materials are convenient. However, one must not overlook the great emphasis that is placed on test scores. Young children who have spent a considerable amount of time completing workbook pages are familiar with the format, the language, and the content of readiness tests and tend to score well on these tests. The assumption is made that this reflects the child's readiness for reading. According to Delores Durkin, one of the leading researchers in this area, many of the children she studied had been surpassed in reading by the end of first grade by children with lower readiness scores. She found that children who were better readers at the end of first grade had been in kindergarten programs that had rich experience-based opportunities. Since they had not done as many paper-and-pencil tasks, they had not performed as well on reading readiness tests at the end of kindergarten. Both of these findings are very significant and should influence curriculum planning; however, decision makers seem more comfortable with a prescribed program.

The process of reading involves attitudes, habits, skills, ideas, knowledge of the varying meanings of words, and capacity to learn to read. It is a two-way process. A child brings meanings to printed symbols, and when these symbols are put in a certain sequence to make a sentence, the child receives a new meaning. The understanding essential for this process is developed through firsthand experiences rather than through marking a response to a direction given by the teacher when completing a worksheet. Accumulated experiences help children express and receive ideas. When teachers read to children, children use their background knowledge to interpret the message. Through conversation and discussion, children clarify misunderstandings caused by a limited understanding of word meanings. This process of clarifying must not be neglected.

When the teacher is sensitive to children's interest, the planned environment reaches out to the children and gradually introduces them to other experiences--thus broadening the scope of their interests and understandings and expanding their meaningful language. If you recall the scenario, Ms. Green's room provided an environment that reached out to the children. Each child was eager to engage in an activity. No doubt the teacher used numerous opportunities for adding new words to the children's vocabulary, for encouraging children to dictate stories, and for acquainting the children with the library which could be used as a resource to expand upon interests such as the space boat or bird egg. The perceptive teacher introduces descriptive terms when discussing a high-interest project with children. She listens to the language and ideas that children are expressing and expands, clarifies, supports, or ponders and wonders with the children. Often the enthusiasm for a specific activity such as the space boat serves as a means for extending the child's interests into other curriculum areas. Perhaps the child has had little enthusiasm for art or music; painting or decorating the space boat would encourage the use of a new medium and cause the child to add new meaning to words that are associated with painting. It is also not too uncommon for kindergarten-aged boys to be disinterested in music and creative movement. Writing a song about the space boat or moving through space in your own space boat has potential for involvement in a manner that has appeal. The involvement through language and physical control of body nurtures development that is closely associated with skills used in learning to read.

In proposing that the best way to build the foundations for reading is through an experience-based approach that is rich in opportunities for children to use language, that actively involves the child in hands-on manipulations of materials, and that encourages the child to make choices and be responsible for learning, it is imperative that teachers be prepared to interpret for those who are not early childhood educators the learning that is occurring in the various activity centers.

Parents, elementary teachers, and administrators are apt not to have studied child development and curriculum for young children and should not be expected to interpret the learning activity centers with scholarly insight. Activity centers for art, dramatic play, blockbuilding, or music are often labeled as "just play" and relegated to a frills category. The relatedness to building foundations for reading is not as obvious for these centers. The language book center is usually considered the major source of language learnings. Even though their major focus is not a language experience, other centers also enhance language development.

This afternoon I would like to select art, block building, dramatic play, and music as four examples of activity centers that provide rich opportunities for young children to develop skills that are associated with learning to read. Since these are activity centers, the children are usually engaged in conversation with their peers or teachers and using language freely; however, other benefits that are accruing from the experiences should not be overlooked.

In the art center we may find children painting at an easel. When children use a paint brush, they learn how to control movements, make shapes, make thick or thin lines, patterns, or details. Those are the same components of letters, and children who are provided this medium for exploring will soon be adding letters or their name or a page filled with letters to their works of art. The feeling of discovery and success usually generates a great desire within the young child to repeat an activity--the most profitable form of drill that occurs. Also, when children create patterns and designs, they develop an awareness of spatial relationships which are necessary for separating words on a page when reading. Closely related is the ability to see an image which means the child has figure-ground observational skills or is capable of lifting that object away from the background. When children paint they develop the ability to separate the figure from the background, another process that occurs when reading.

The benefits of finger painting closely parallel those for brush painting. In this process the child is using a body part instead of a brush and develops different fine motor skills. Not to be overlooked, however, is the exploration that finger painting encourages. One sweep and a design can be changed or eliminated. The fear of making a mistake is alleviated; experimentation is much less risky than when a paint brush is stroked across a sheet of paper or a crayon tracks across a paper leaving a permanent trail.

Clay is another medium usually found in an art activity center which usually goes unnoticed when experiences that nurture reading readiness are cited. In examining the uses of clay, one would find that children roll, pound, make shapes, pinch away pieces, and add on pieces. You often hear, "Hey, teacher, look at this now," which indicates that the child is developing an awareness of whole-part relationships as well as shapes. Letters are made of shapes, and letters are parts that make up whole words. Developing an awareness and understanding of whole-part relationships enables the child to become aware of changes and how things look when they change. Few would disagree that this is a skill that is necessary when learning to read.

In block building, children have an opportunity to use two types of blocks: hollow blocks and unit blocks. This affords children the opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of shapes and sizes. In the process of sorting and constructing, children develop abilities to see similarities and differences in sizes and shapes. For the child who has difficulty distinguishing size and shape visually, blocks may be placed together for actual measurement. When children build there is an order and sequence to the placement of blocks in a structure. When reading written language there is an order and sequence. Block building enables children to become familiar with that concept as a process.

During block-building experience children engage in sharing of ideas, planning their work, and solving problems that arise. Expressive and receptive skill development matures as children work through a mutually agreed upon project. The perceptive teacher plays a special role by providing labels for the structures children build. As children develop an awareness that symbols stand for the name of things, they often learn a number of sight words. Being able to recognize a word or a few words arouses much pride of achievement within the young child.

A dramatic play center, whether it is the housekeeping center, a grocery store, a shoe store, or a hospital, provides children an opportunity to use language in a functional manner. When children use language in a natural manner to function in a particular setting, they develop an understanding of words. To cite an example, I would like to describe an observation of a group of kindergarten children role playing in a pretend grocery store. The customer, a five-year-old girl, approached the storekeeper, a five-year-old boy, and ordered several items one of which was five pounds of sugar. The store, which was not the most modern, relied on the storekeeper's skills to scoop and weigh the sugar, which was actually sand. The storekeeper scooped some sugar, put it in a bag, and placed it on the counter. The customer said, "Did you weigh it?" The storekeeper placed the bag on the scales and said, "Yeh." The customer said, "I said five pounds," in a rather emphatic tone. The storekeeper added more sugar, paying little attention to the reading on the scales, and returned the bag to the counter. She again asked, "Did you weigh it right? I said five pounds." The storekeeper returned the bag to the scales and added more sugar until there was mutual agreement that the scales indicated the bag contained five pounds.

An observer would conclude that this episode showed how two children functioned very differently in their ability to carry out a role. One would also note that the word *pound* and the quantity of *five pounds* probably have new meanings for the boy. The episode provided a firsthand experience where children could learn independently and develop insight in a way that was a more appropriate learning approach than having the teacher set up a contrived weighing and measuring activity. Being able to accept another point of view is important when developing reading comprehension. Young children need firsthand experiences that encourage the sharing of differing ideas.

Music experiences which include singing songs, creating new songs, and responding rhythmically with simple instruments or body movements has implications for developing reading-related skills. When children sing or make up new songs, their facility with language is strengthened. Children are encouraged to use language in a playful way through singing nonsense words, discovering rhyming words, or repeating phrases in different tones. Auditory discrimination is heightened when children listen to rhythmic patterns or create their own rhythmic patterns in a relaxed, nonthreatening experience. Music provides an opportunity for the children's recall skills to be enhanced as they repeat rhythmic patterns or sing familiar songs again and again. As children develop favorite songs and music activities, much repetition takes place. When young children initiate repetitive tasks, skills are refined in a positive manner that is of value to each individual.

Fostering good language must be an integral part of all curriculum areas. Children must have a wide range of experiences in order to broaden their scope of understanding. Encouraging the use of language in these

experiences broadens the knowledge of the world around them. A cycle is set in place that has a spiraling effect with each new experience generating more interest and knowledge which leads to other new understandings. The teacher plays a major role in keeping the cycle spinning. Young children need not only significant people to provide experiences but someone who will listen to what they are communicating both verbally and nonverbally, someone who understands how young children build the foundation for learning to read.

Speakers Jan McCarthy and James Mullican.

There is no other beginning of learning but wonder.

Plato

WHEREIN WE'LL CATCH THE KING

Carl Personke

Yesterday we took a position that direct instruction in vocabulary is a key element in the development of reading comprehension rather than a unique task to be used solely as a decoding device. At that time I used the phrase "building bridges between the new and the known." As I promised then, I will return to that statement as we now examine some other aspects of reading comprehension. There is a danger, perhaps, that this phrase may become a motto and, like many mottos, lose its effectiveness and meaning through excessive repetition. However, it is such a key when we consider comprehension that it warrants more than one iteration and is where we will begin today--building bridges between the new and the known. To quote Durkin (1981), "Since everyone's encounters with print confirm the dependence of reading on background information (now commonly called *world knowledge*), even the most rebellious of students probably never objected to that part of the course" (p. 24).

I also promised to examine in greater detail the role of schema theory in reading comprehension. That discussion follows and will serve as our bridge between the new and the known.

I referred to schema theory as an "amorphous body of assumptions and research" yesterday. This was, if unkind, not accidental, for it is very difficult to sort out from the various literature a specific thing we can call "schema theory." This is probably because so much of the research has been conducted by researchers in various disciplines--psychologists, educationists, psycholinguists, reading teachers--that we find equally various manifestations of the theory couched in many specialized tongues and expressing many specialized viewpoints. Everybody wants to "own" schema theory, but nobody knows to whom it belongs.

Fortunately, this is not a real problem since schemata are a part of the acquisition, interpretation, and implementation of knowledge and, as such, belong to all disciplines concerned with knowledge and learning. Also, fortunately, if schema theory is sometimes confounded by the specialized expression of various disciplines, there is also a "lingua franca" of schema which can provide a definition precise enough, and a structure distinct enough to make it useful as a theory of knowledge rather than the sometimes confusing body of related, yet often amorphous, assumptions and research I earlier referred to.

There is nothing distinctly "new" about schema theory; indeed, the theory itself would support the idea that there is nothing distinctly "new" about any body of knowledge. The early "arm chair" psychologists of the gestalt theories postulated that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts." This is not unlike the modern-day statement of Anderson (1977): "The force of the concept of schema is to direct attention to the *patterning of elements* [italics mine]. What the elements are and how they interrelate cannot profitably be addressed as separate issues . . . the mental representations which are used during perception and comprehension, and which evolve as a result of these processes, have a holistic character which cannot be understood as simple functions of their constituents" (p. 418). This is a fundamental characteristic of "schema"--that what we learn, and what we remember, is determined by the prior knowledge, arranged in schematic structures, which we have already assimilated.

A second fundamental of schema theory is that learning involves schema *use* and schema *change*. These can be thought of in terms of Piaget's assimilation (use) and accommodation (change). That is, each time we "learn" (perceive, comprehend) something new, we learn it according to what we already know and, at the same time, will change what we already know to accommodate the new learning. We will, then, build new schemata

If we think back to our discussion of vocabulary development, we should be able to see how these two fundamental characteristics are integral to such tasks as semantic mapping and semantic feature analysis, and how vocabulary development is, indeed, an integral aspect of what we call reading comprehension--rather than something involved only with the decoding of the printed word.

Before we leave schema theory as such, let me offer one more quote from Anderson which rather sums up the importance of schema theory. "Schema change is the sine qua non of the acquisition of knowledge as opposed to the mere aggregation of information" (p. 429). It is the bridge we want to build between the new and the know.

How does this relate to reading comprehension? Again, let me turn to Durkin (1981) who states, "One major tenet of schema theory is that comprehension is as dependent on what is in a reader's head as it is on what is printed" (p. 25). This doesn't seem very startling; we teachers have known for years that what we take *from* a page is determined by what we take *to* a page. However, we have not always availed ourselves of this knowledge when planning for the teaching of reading. Schema theory *focuses* on this concept and, by the process of focusing, can be of vital importance as we examine reading comprehension.

One final statement, then, from Durkin: ". . . schema theory applied to reading is attractive because it supports what our own experiences as readers tells us: the more we know before we read, the more we learn as we read" (p. 27). I will go one step further and say that it tells us as teachers that if we want to "teach" reading comprehension we must attend more specifically to pre-reading activities which provide direct attention to comprehension. We cannot hope for the existence of the prior knowledge, nor simply hope that the "bridge" will build itself; we must participate in the building of the "bridges"--the schemata necessary to comprehension.

An examination of the literature suggests that there are seventeen tasks we should, or do, teach in developing reading comprehension skills. These are: (1) paraphrasing, (2) association, (3) main idea and details, (4) comparison, (5) figurative language, (6) ambiguous statements, (7) causal relations, (8) sequence, (9) anaphora, (10) fact and opinion, (11) bias, (12) author's craft, (13) mental images, (14) study skills, (15) reality and fantasy, (16) punctuation, and (17) literary form.

But, knowing of these comprehension tasks, do we, indeed, teach them? Unfortunately, research would indicate that we do so in varying degrees for each of the seventeen, and in no case do we attend sufficiently to *direct instruction* in comprehension--a situation very similar to that which we discovered in teaching vocabulary.

In a study conducted by Durkin (1978-1979), observing teachers of reading, it was noted that only 31.8 percent of class time was devoted to comprehension. The rest went to such things as word identification, assignments, oral reading, transition, and "non-instruction." Of even

greater note is that, when that 31.8 percent for comprehension is broken down further, over half of that time (17.7%) is spent on assessment and only .6 percent is devoted to instruction for comprehension. These results would seem to support the assertion that there is a great gap between the identification of comprehension tasks and direct instruction in these tasks.

Since there is not enough time in this paper for a considered discussion of each of these tasks, I will focus the rest of the time on only one--main idea and supporting details. There are several reasons for selecting this particular task for examination at this time.

1. It is found to be one of the tasks most taught or recommended in basal series and reading textbooks.

2. I am not satisfied that, despite this attention, it is always adequately taught, nor are teachers adequately prepared to teach it.

3. As an English teacher, I find that there is a marked disparity between the way we teach about writing paragraphs and the way paragraphs are actually written.

Let us look first at the third concern. I shall always remember, although I no longer have access to the exact quote, the words of Albert Marquardt when he discussed paragraph writing. To paraphrase: We always teach students to begin a paragraph with a topic sentence. What writer ever asked himself, what is the topic sentence of this paragraph? before writing it? This is to say, paragraphs may, or may not, contain topic sentences (main ideas). Most do. Also, paragraphs may, or may not, begin with a topic sentence--some do, some don't. However, to quote just one book, *Paragraph Writing* (1970), "Whenever possible, the topic sentence should be placed at the beginning of a paragraph." Unfortunately, much of our instruction in main ideas and supporting details is based upon this same supposition.

A more realistic approach to this task recognizes that real paragraphs offer a variety of patterns of main idea and details. Cramer (n.d.) suggests that there are five main types of paragraphs and that students should receive direct instruction in classifying all five of these types. He further suggests that instruction should proceed from simple classification to learning to identify "favorite paragraph types" used habitually by authors they read.

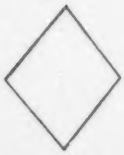
The paragraph types suggested by Cramer are:

Type 1

Type 2

In Type 1 paragraphs, the topic sentence comes first. The diagram for this type of paragraph is a triangle with apex pointing downward. Since the central idea stands at the head of the paragraph, the base line of the triangle is drawn at the top. As the paragraph tapers off with details, the triangle tapers off to a point. In Type 2 paragraphs, the topic sentence comes last. Therefore, the base line of the triangle is drawn at the bottom.

Type 3



In Type 3 paragraphs, the writer begins and ends with examples. Since the main idea is embedded in the middle, the diagram resembles a diamond.

Type 4

In Type 4 paragraphs, sometimes an author chooses to split the main idea to signal a shift in thought. Sometimes an author will state one idea at both the beginning and the end of a paragraph in order to emphasize it.

Type 5

In Type 5 paragraphs, no main idea is stated. All the sentences contribute, and the reader must infer what the main idea is. Since no one sentence takes the lead, a good diagram looks like the one above.

Type 6

A sixth type, not included in Cramer's discussion but often apparent, has a statement of the main idea with perhaps one supporting detail. This is followed by a restatement of the main idea and further supporting details.

One excellent method of teaching children to recognize the different patterns of paragraph construction, and thus establish the main idea as distinct from supporting details, is to write the same information in paragraphs of all six types. The children can then identify main idea and details in each case and discuss the various paragraph forms. They can even assess why an author may use one type or another.

The following examples were prepared by a student in a reading methods course at the University of Wisconsin.*

1. *Antonia is always happy in her grandmother's house.* Grandmother has a lion's-paw table and a bathtub that squats on fat white feet, and there is a stain-glass window on her front door. Grandmother also has a great big black piano that sounds simply beautiful.

2. Grandmother's house has a lion's-paw table and a bathtub that squats on fat white feet, and there is a stain glass window on her front door. I love grandmother's piano too. *I am always happy at grandmother's house.*

3. Grandmother has lots of flowers at her house. She has a wonderful piano that I like to play. *I am always happy at my grandmother's house.* She has a neat stained glass window on her front door, and a lions-paw table.

4. *Antonia loves to be at her grandmother's house.* She plays in her yard and picks flowers from the garden. Antonia also loves to play her grandmother's piano. *Antonia always has fun at her grandmother's house.*

5. Antonia plays in her grandmother's yard and picks flowers from her garden. Antonia loves to play her grandmother's big black piano. Antonia loves the pretty stain-glass window on her grandmother's front door.

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*Used with permission of Jodi Bachman, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Explain how difficult it would be to follow/comprehend this type of paragraph.

6. *I am always happy at my grandmother's house.* I love the food that she makes me. *My grandmother's house is always a fun place to be.* I play in her yard and pick flowers from her garden. I also like to play her big black piano.

To summarize, then, let me make two very important statements about instruction in reading comprehension.

1. We learn according to previously established schemata. That is, we establish a connection between prior (world) knowledge and new (text) knowledge. It is the teacher's role to help the learner establish these connections.

2. Instruction in reading comprehension must be specifically planned-for, direct instruction.

If we follow these precepts we can become "bridge builders" of the future, and that future will belong to the better readers and the better learners in our classes.

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